

## CHURCH ADVERTISING.

The question has been raised whether each church is not under obligation to itself and its errand in the world that it make itself known, and actively solicit attention from the world around it. It is not so much whether a man can find a place of worship when he desires to go to church, as it is whether the church has done its duty in making itself known to all men in the community, and that it has a message for all men of most solemn import and urgency. It must be remembered that the Church is sent on a mission, and to sit down within its walls and wait for men to come can not be the accomplishment of that mission. Can it be true, that in sections and cities of the land there are masses of people unchurched, ungathered and uncaring, because the Church has not approached them, has not made itself known to them, and kept before them its appeal?

It is now held that the Church is under the strongest obligation to find wise and effective methods of advertising itself, and keeping itself in the sight of all men. Men must be reached where they are. It is the man outside of the church who needs most of all the message the Church has to give. Whether men come to church or not, it is the great duty of the church to go and find men and leave them without excuse. The church should be the most public of all institutions, whose doors are open always. So many other things are pressed urgently and persistently upon public attention, things good and bad. So many forms of error, so many movements of pretended healing and philanthropy and religion, all loud and pretentious, that the church can not afford to be silent and reserved.

Advertising then in some form must be. The church must bear a trumpet, and make itself and its great message heard in every ward, in every section, in every home.

It is not a personal advertisement of the preacher that is wanted, not the perpetual appearance of the Christian minister's name in the papers with flattering words. Herein is pride and vain-glory, and herein is offense and shame to the Master and his word. Nor must there be any advertisement of a deceptive kind, attempting to win by a species of guile which is unworthy and vulgar, if it be not eventually false. Such things destroy respect for the church and repel from the church door. Of all things in the world, the church must have no sham and no humbug. It must preserve its high character and give weight to its message by its dignity and sobriety, even when it is most active in its efforts and loudest in its call.

Without publicity and some sanctified form of advertising, the church surely loses its ground, and soon the multitude pass by answering other calls.

The Rev. Charles Stelzle, Secretary of Church and Labor for the Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., has made a thorough study of this subject. His book lately published, "Principle of Successful Church Advertising," is a careful statement of the need and obligation, the limits, the qualities of proper advertising, and then of the best of legitimate methods; newspaper cards inserted as paid advertisements, posters, window cards, booklets, and cards for

distribution, the weekly church program, or bulletin, or paper, use of illustrations, all of these things are described. Mr. Stelzle is faithful in warning against the unfit and injurious kind of publicity, and most informing and helpful as to many things which may be done.

## WHAT CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE CAN DO.

In the theatrical world recently there has been a lesson of value to the Christian ministry. It appears in the narration of some facts which we have learned from friends who are well informed upon the matters of which they speak.

For weeks past there has been presented upon the stage in New York City, and we think in other cities of the North, a play which contained at least one scene of coarse and lewd character. Night after night it appeared on the boards, and repeated its debasing influences without hindrance.

The manager brought his troupe to Richmond, Va., and produced this scene along with the others on the stage. Richmond is a city in which the people attend church. At the evening services we have seen good attendance such as we have seen in few other cities. The people have a high standard of that which is right and pure. That night the Mayor of the city was present, we suspect not by accident. When this scene appeared, with its lewd and polluting suggestiveness, the Mayor went behind the scenes and ordered the manager to ring down the curtain. "By what right do you thus order me?" "As Mayor of this city I require you to drop that curtain and suspend this play." And it was done.

The troupe came South, to Charlotte and to Atlanta. We are not advised concerning its presentation in the former city, but in this city, the Mayor happened also to be present, not by accident, and reported that in the play he saw nothing objectionable, except that it was dull. Why? Very significant is that question, Why? The manager found that in New York where the foreign element of population, with its low moralities, has smothered, to a large extent, the high standards of Christianity, he could present his lewdness with impunity. But he also had discovered that in the South, where most of the citizens are native born, the principles of the Gospel have a deeper influence and a stronger hold upon the community at large; and that public sentiment sustains the officers of the law in maintaining purity. Therefore, he took warning by the one experience, and just quietly omitted from his performance the objectionable scene.

Just here lies the power of the Christian ministry. It is not in attacking particular evils, but in deepening the love of God and of purity in the hearts of the people, so that they will sustain those things which are pure and lovely and of good report. If the ministers had made an assault from the pulpit upon this particular play, they would have advertised it effectively, and the result would have been what the cartoonist represented: On the left the preacher denouncing it; on the right a crowd of men at the box office clamoring for tickets. But as the church has succeeded in deepening the sense of purity in the hearts of the people, the Mayor felt that he would be supported in demanding purity, and the play-manager repressed the disgusting scene. Let us press the good work of elevating the moral tone of the community.

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